

Wisconsin Initiative For Agricultural Exports Export Expansion Grant Program Request For Proposal (RFP)

INTRODUCTION

The Export Expansion Grant is a competitive grant program that is part of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s (DATCP) Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports. DATCP manages grant with the objectives to accelerate export growth of Wisconsin dairy, meat and crop products through export expansion projects. Successful projects will meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Cultivate new-to-export and emerging-export agribusinesses.
- Build exporting capacity and knowledge of the industry.
- Increase understanding of foreign markets and consumers.
- Make products export ready or develop products for specific export markets.
- Promote Wisconsin products in foreign markets.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Funds will be distributed through a competitive review process. Grants will be awarded in amounts between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Projects can be up to two years in duration, with an option to extend for one more year pending approval of a written request submitted at least six months before the contract expiration date. Matching funds are required at 20% of the grant award. Matching funds can be cash or in-kind. Matching funds expensed during the project must be documented in the same manner as proof of reimbursable grant expenses

Funding will be distributed in accordance with the provisions in Wis. 2021 Act 92 Wisconsin to benefit agribusinesses in the following product groups: milk and dairy products; meat, including poultry and fish, and meat products; and crop and crop products. DATCP staff will determine the product category a project will be assigned based on the Harmonized Tariff System code of the majority of products the applicant is currently exporting or plans to export.

APPLICATION AND FUNDING TIMING

RFP released	February 18, 2022
Applications due to WI DATCP	March 18, 2022
Applications scored and selected by review committee	April 1, 2022
Selected applicants notified by WI DATCP	April 6, 2022
Approval letters issued by WI DATCP	April 11, 2022
Anticipated executed contract	May 6, 2022
Anticipated project start date	May 6, 2022
All projects must conclude no later than	May 6, 2024

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PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must satisfy the following criteria to be deemed eligible for funding under the Export Expansion Grant Program. An applicant must:

- Be a not-for-profit organization located in Wisconsin currently serving or demonstrating the ability to serve Wisconsin agribusiness companies.
- Demonstrate the capability to receive, manage and provide reporting on the projects that meet the grant objectives.
- Not be an employee of DATCP or an employee's immediate family member (i.e. parent, sibling, spouse, or child).

Examples of eligible applicants are: Wisconsin agribusiness associations; Wisconsin technical colleges and state and private universities; regional, county, and municipal economic development organizations; and others currently serving or demonstrating the ability to serve Wisconsin agribusiness companies. Eligible non-profit organizations may collaborate with other state, regional and national organizations to complete their selected projects.

Wisconsin agribusiness companies are defined as business establishments located in Wisconsin that produce and/or process products made from agricultural sources. Agribusinesses are generally categorized in the 2017 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) under category numbers: 11 — Agriculture, Forestry Fishing and Hunting, 311 — Food Manufacturing, 312 — Beverage and Tobacco Manufacturing, 3161 — Leather Hide Tanning and Finishing, and 321 — Wood Product Manufacturing.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Export expansion projects must meet one or more of the Export Expansion Grant Objectives and demonstrate a benefit to agribusinesses in one or more of the product groups included in Wis. 2021 Act 92 Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports. Projects will be selected based on scope, impact and export growth potential for milk and dairy products; meat, including poultry and fish, and meat products; and crop and crop products.

The intent is for agribusiness industry organizations, economic development organizations and academic institutions to develop innovative and impactful projects to provide strategic and long-term growth of Wisconsin agricultural exports and exporters. Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Contract with a marketing agency to promote dairy, meat and crop products globally

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- Create an Export Accelerator program to evaluate and refine a company's export business model.
- Develop a freight and logistics consolidation hub to improve economies of scale for high-value perishable products.
- Conduct consumer taste preference or segmentation studies in key opportunity markets.
- Create and deliver an export compliance, documentation and operations course and certificate at the technical college level focused on food and agricultural products.
- Conduct agribusiness industry specific trade promotion activities such as inbound buyer missions and outbound buyer missions.
- Deploy a marketing and promotion campaign targeted to foreign buyers demonstrating sustainability efforts and animal welfare programs undertaken by Wisconsin producers.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Travel expenses associated with a trade promotion activity for organization staff, contractors or inbound international buyers, including:
 - Airfare.
 - Lodging in accordance with Wisconsin in-state rates or United States State Department international per diem rates, though exceptions may be made for prevailing trade show and conference rates.
 - Ground transportation, including mileage for staff travel reimbursed at the Wisconsin State rate and bus rental for inbound buyer groups.
 - Hosted meals.
 - Venue, audio visual equipment rental.
- Marketing material production and publication costs.
- Event promotion costs.
- Purchased research and reports on foreign markets, industries and buyers.
- Subscriptions to international data tools and reporting and research services.
- Fees for contractors with experience in food and agricultural product export compliance, international business development, marketing, export logistics, market intelligence, product and packaging development for foreign markets.
- Fees for Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Food Export of the Midwest, US Dairy Export Council and independent in-market trade representatives with demonstrated capability in food and agricultural products in the markets they cover.
- Translation, interpretation and localization services.
- Food and agricultural products, packaging materials and supplies for product development.
- Advertising and promotion related to the grant project.

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- Other expenses not listed will be reviewed by DATCP staff for eligibility

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include:

- Real estate purchases.
- Repayment of loans or mortgages.
- Capital equipment expenses.
- Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract.
- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project.
- Advertising expenses other than those related to promotion of the grant project.
- Legal fees.
- Lobbying, fundraising or other political activity.
- Any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMITTAL PROCESS

- The application form is located on the DATCP website at: [Location](#)
- Applications must include the following:
 - Legal name of the organization, contract signer and title, and project coordinator.
 - Contact phone number and email address.
 - Grant Request and estimated total cost of the project.
 - Project start and end date.
 - The product category (milk and dairy products; meat and meat products; crop and crop products) the project focus will accelerate export growth of through the export expansion projects. [NOTE: DATCP International Agribusiness Center staff can assist with identifying the product category.]
 - A project summary including why the project is important to your facility, steps/actions/processes that will take place, and results/changes that will happen as a result of the project.
 - A description of how your project will meet one of the following objectives:
 - Cultivate new-to-export and emerging-export agribusinesses.
 - Build exporting capacity and knowledge of the industry.
 - Increase understanding of foreign markets and consumers.
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- A description of how your project will benefit the Wisconsin agribusiness export expansion efforts.
- A description of your work plan including the major steps/activities needed to complete your project, who is responsible for the step, and the timeline for each step/activity.
- An estimated total project budget, providing the grant amount, in-kind and cash matching funds (if any), and total amount for each of the following expense categories:
 - Salaries - position, number of hours and hourly rate.
 - Services/Subcontractors, including translation, interpretation and localization services - organization or individual name, number of hours and hourly rate.
 - Travel – destination, method and rate.
 - Market information, data subscriptions, purchased research, reports - name of report or service.
 - Promotion, marketing, publication expenses – item description.
 - Supplies and materials - item description, number of units, and unit cost.
 - Miscellaneous Expenses – item description.
 - The budget must also list total sums for the grant amount, matching funds, and the entire project.
- Applications must be emailed to ryand.dunn@wisconsin.gov by 5:00pm on [Date]
- If you do not have computer access to download and complete the application, contact Ryan Dunn at 608-590-7239.

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PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA

This is a competitive grant process. Each application will be reviewed by a committee comprising DATCP staff, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation staff, and food and agriculture export professionals. Each application will receive a rating based on the application scoring criteria outlined on the last page of this document. The rating score will determine the proposals to be funded.

Preference may be given for proposals that:

- Demonstrate multiple benefits to agribusiness exporters in one or more of the three agricultural product groups.
- Show collaboration between multiple organizations
- Offer an innovative approach to grow Wisconsin agricultural product exports

DATCP may require additional information and/or an establishment visit to review the proposed project.

CONTRACTS

DATCP will develop a contract for each funded project. No funding commitment is final, and no project may begin incurring expenses until the contract is signed by the grant recipient and DATCP. An appendix completed by the grantee and approved by DATCP finalizing the details of the work plan, timeline, budget, company/consultant doing work, and implementation plan will be included in the contract.

Grant contracts must be signed and returned to DATCP within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the contract within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay is approved by DATCP.

PAYMENTS

This is a reimbursement grant. Payments will be made monthly, following DATCP's receipt of an invoice documenting expenses incurred by the grantee. An amount of 10% of the grant award will be held as a grant final payment. The final payment will be made upon submission of a final invoice and DATCP approval of a written summary report of the project. Invoices must be itemized, include receipts or other proof of payment in United States Dollars in English or with English translation in United States Dollars.

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REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

DATCP reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Progress reports are due every six months from the contract execution date and will include at a minimum:

- Project status
- Steps completed in the last 6 months
- Actions to be completed in the next 6 months
- Any barriers or issues with the project

An end-of-project summary will be required. This summary report will include at a minimum:

- Brief description of project intent
- Summary of project accomplishments and outcomes, including the benefits to the agricultural product groups of milk and dairy products, meat and meat products, crop and crop products
- Other insights from project execution and recommendations for future improvements or projects building from the findings and results of the funded project

In addition to this summary report, DATCP reserves the right to conduct follow-up surveys of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the Export Expansion Grant program.

Applicants who do not submit reports on time or submit incomplete reports may be required to return all previously disbursed funds to DATCP and may be removed from future funding opportunities.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS

The grantee will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all correspondence with DATCP, receipts, invoices, and copies of reports and documents associated with the project. The grantee shall retain all data and other records relating to the acquisition and performance of the Grant Award Agreement for a period of four years after the completion of the contract. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records.

MONITORING

DATCP reserves the right to perform site-monitoring visits to all grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required period and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information as well as site visits.

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LIABILITY

DATCP will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal.

OPEN RECORDS

Applications submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports shall be subject to disclosure under Wisconsin's Public Records Law, Wis. Stat. ch. 19, subch. II. If the grant applicant or recipient wants any information in an application to be deemed a trade secret, the information should be labeled using "trade secret" and the requested status should be noted to DATCP when the application is submitted. DATCP will notify the grant recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed to be a trade secret. Such information may be kept confidential by DATCP only as authorized by law (see Wis. Stat. § 19.36(5)).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of DATCP. DATCP reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use and authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement. DATCP also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals, summary reports and survey findings to the DATCP website
- Reject any or all proposals received
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Wisconsin
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants
- Require a good faith effort on part of the project sponsor to work with DATCP subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Wisconsin
- Withhold any payments when contract terms are not met
- Partially fund applications

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Evaluation Criteria	How well described?			Points
1. Grant Application	+	✓	-	10 possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project well organized, thought out, and explained in a way that makes sense and sounds like it can be carried out successfully? 				
2. Statement of need	+	✓	-	35 possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the project support the program objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding of international buyers Gain foreign market insights Develop or enhance a Wisconsin brand identity for food and agricultural products Attract and develop new exporters Improve export operations and logistics Make products export ready 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the Project Summary elaborate how the project will accomplish one or more of the program objectives? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project important and timely? Does the project have support from agribusinesses? 				
3. Activities and Outcomes	+	✓	-	25 possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project make sense? Do the activities fit the project intent and objectives? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the applicant developed measurable outcomes for their project and do the outcomes fit the project activities and show that the project met the need or purpose? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do activities result in at least one positive outcome of the grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding of international buyers and markets Develop or enhance a Wisconsin Brand Identity in foreign markets Attract and develop new exports Improve operations and logistics Make products export ready 				
4. Budget	+	✓	-	20 possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does each item in the budget relate to the described project? 				

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• Is each item necessary to achieve the outcome?				
• Is total amount justifiable for the return on investment?				
• How reasonable are costs for each item?				
5. Extra Points	+	✓	-	10 possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate multiple benefits to agribusiness exporters in one or more of the three agricultural product groups ○ Show collaboration between multiple organizations ○ Offer an innovative approach to grow Wisconsin agricultural product exports 				
TOTAL				100 possible